

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In the Office Action dated April 6, 2007, Claims 1-32 are pending, of which Claims 1-16 have been elected for prosecution. Claims 17-32 are canceled above, and Applicant expressly reserves the right to file one or more divisional applications directed to the subject matter of these claims. Claims 1 and 3-15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Pat. No. 6,551,415 ("Jones") in view of U.S. Pat. App. Pub. No. 2003/0086574 ("Higgs"). Claims 2 and 16 are rejected under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jones and Higgs in further view of U.S. Pat. No. 3,809,919 ("Aaron").

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the courtesies extended to the undersigned during the telephone interview on May 30, 2007. During the interview, the Examiner discussed with the undersigned the scope of the claims and the cited references, Jones, Higgs, and Aaron. The Examiner tentatively indicated that the cited references would not read on Claims 1 and 10, as amended above. Further, Applicant indicated that new independent claims would be submitted, generally incorporating subject matter of dependent Claims 5 and 7, as was also agreed to be allowable. Accordingly, Applicant requests reconsideration of the claims in view of the above amendments and the following remarks, which Applicant considers to be a summary of the matters discussed during the interview.

Claim 1, as amended, is directed to an automatic car wash system designed to process multiple vehicles simultaneously. The system includes stations spaced along a path, a control device operatively connected to the stations, and at least two detectors designed to indicate the presence of at least one vehicle. At least one proximity device is operatively connected to the control device for detecting a relative distance between the rear of one of the vehicles and a front of another of the vehicles, and a radio transmitter is operable to transmit information to the multiple vehicles via radio signals.

Jones describes an automatic vehicle wash system that includes a control unit that receives information from a variety of sensors and operates an overhead gantry based upon the detected parameters of the vehicle. *See* Abstract. For example, a front sensor array 40 of Jones includes three through-beam sensors 42, 44, 46 that each generate a through-beam 54, 56, 58 transmitted across the width of the vehicle wash bay 11. The vehicle is instructed as the front bumper 52 of the vehicle breaks each of the through-beams 54. *See* col. 5, line 45 – col. 6, line 9. However,

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the sensors do not detect a relative distance between the rear of one vehicle and the front of another vehicle, as set forth in Claims 1 and 10. Nor does the system of Jones provide information to a driver regarding the relative distance, as set forth in Claim 10. Higgs and Aaron fail to cure this deficiency of Jones. Accordingly, Applicant submits that each of Claims 1 and 10 is allowable, as are each of the dependent claims.

New independent Claims 33 and 40 include features generally corresponding to the dependent Claims 5 and 7. In particular, the car wash system of Claim 33 recites a control device that is operatively connected to the plurality of stations and “wherein the control device is operable to assign a unique radio frequency to each of the multiple vehicles and direct different information to each vehicle via the radio transmitter.” Claim 40 recites “a plurality of radio transmitters spaced along the elongate path that operate on a common frequency and arranged to transmit information over a distance of no more than about 10 feet to the multiple vehicles via radio signals, wherein the control device is operable to direct specific information to each of the radio transmitters so that the specific information can be directed to a particular vehicle depending on the location of the vehicle along the path of travel.”

As acknowledged in the Office Action, Jones does not teach the use of a radio signal in signaling vehicles to move through a car wash. Instead, the Office Action relies on Higgs in this regard. Higgs relates to a drive-in movie theater and/or events center that has a short range radio broadcast system that can send radio signals to cars using different frequencies. However, Higgs does not teach or suggest assigning a unique frequency to each vehicle or that different information is directed to each vehicle (Claim 33). Nor does Higgs teach or suggest that radio transmitters operating on a common frequency can be used to direct specific information to each of the radio transmitters so that specific information can be directed to a particular vehicle depending on the location of the vehicle along the path of travel (Claim 40). Accordingly, Applicant submits that these claims are also allowable. New dependent Claims 35-39 and 41-45 include features generally corresponding to the previous dependent claims.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant submits that Claims 1-16 and 33-45 are allowable.

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CONCLUSIONS

In view of the remarks presented above, Applicant submits that the present application is in condition for allowance. As such, the issuance of a Notice of Allowance is therefore respectfully requested. In order to expedite the examination of the present application, the Examiner is encouraged to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney in order to resolve any remaining issues.

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required therefore (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

Respectfully submitted,



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